

GOLDEN HILL

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GOLDEN HILL

COMMUNITY PLAN

Prepared by the
Greater Golden Hill Community Planning Committee
and the
City of San Diego Planning Department

Golden Hill Community Plan Amendments

The following amendments have been incorporated into this November 2003 posting of the Golden Hill Community Plan:

Amendment	Date Approved by Planning Commission	Resolution Number	Date Adopted by City Council	Resolution Number
Adoption of Golden Hill Community Plan	Dec. 10, 1987	0148	April 5, 1988	270679
EIR certification for the PDO amendments	--	--	Oct. 30, 1989	R-274597
	--	--	June 19, 1990	R-275937

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INTRODUCTION

THE GOLDEN HILL COMMUNITY

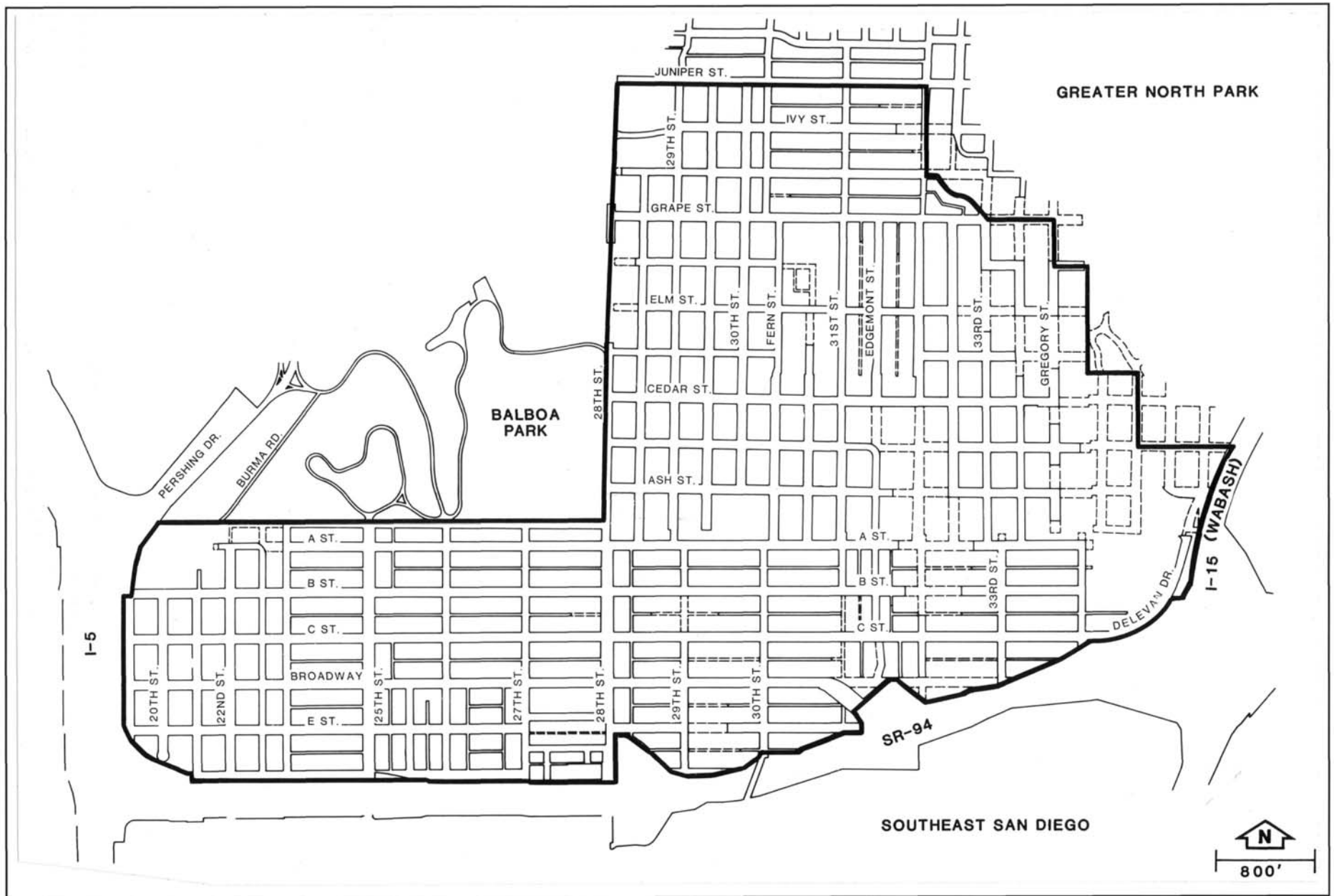
Golden Hill is an urbanized community consisting of approximately 441 acres (excluding public rights-of-way), located east of downtown San Diego. More specifically the area is bounded by Balboa Park and Juniper Street on the north, 32nd Street between Juniper Street and Hawthorn Street, then along Marlton Drive to the 34th Street canyon to Beech Street on the east, State Route 94 on the south and Interstate 5 on the west (see Figure 1). As of 1987, the community contained 15,391 residents living in 6,494 dwelling units on 340 acres. Other land uses in the community include 17 acres of commercial development, 5 acres of industrial development, 59 acres of public land, and 20 acres of vacant land.

Golden Hill is in close proximity to the downtown area, North Park, Mid-City and Southeast San Diego. The community has excellent regional access to metropolitan areas and major commercial areas of Centre City, Mission Valley and the South Bay by means of Interstate 5, State Highways 15 and 94 (see Figure 2).

The gently rolling Golden Hill topography is geographically a series of marine terraces. There is a gradual increase in elevation from approximately 60 feet above sea level on the southwest to approximately 280 feet in elevation on the northeast. This gentle topography is broken by four steeply sloping canyon areas. Because of the topographical characteristics of Golden Hill, spectacular views of the surrounding region can be found. The area west of 28th Street provides many outstanding views of downtown San Diego, San Diego Bay, the Coronado Bay Bridge, the Coronado Islands and Point Loma. View sites along the rim of the 34th Street Canyon reveal the rolling hills of Encanto in Southeast San Diego and the distant Laguna Mountains.

Golden Hill has a long and colorful history which is visible today in the homes representative of Victorian architectural style, colonial revival style, "Craftsman" architectural style, farm house style, bungalows and townhouses. Many of these homes can be directly linked to a significant person or event in San Diego history or represent a particular period in its history or a particular construction process. More importantly, the distinctive character of these Golden Hill homes contributes to the overall scale, character, identity and sense of the community.

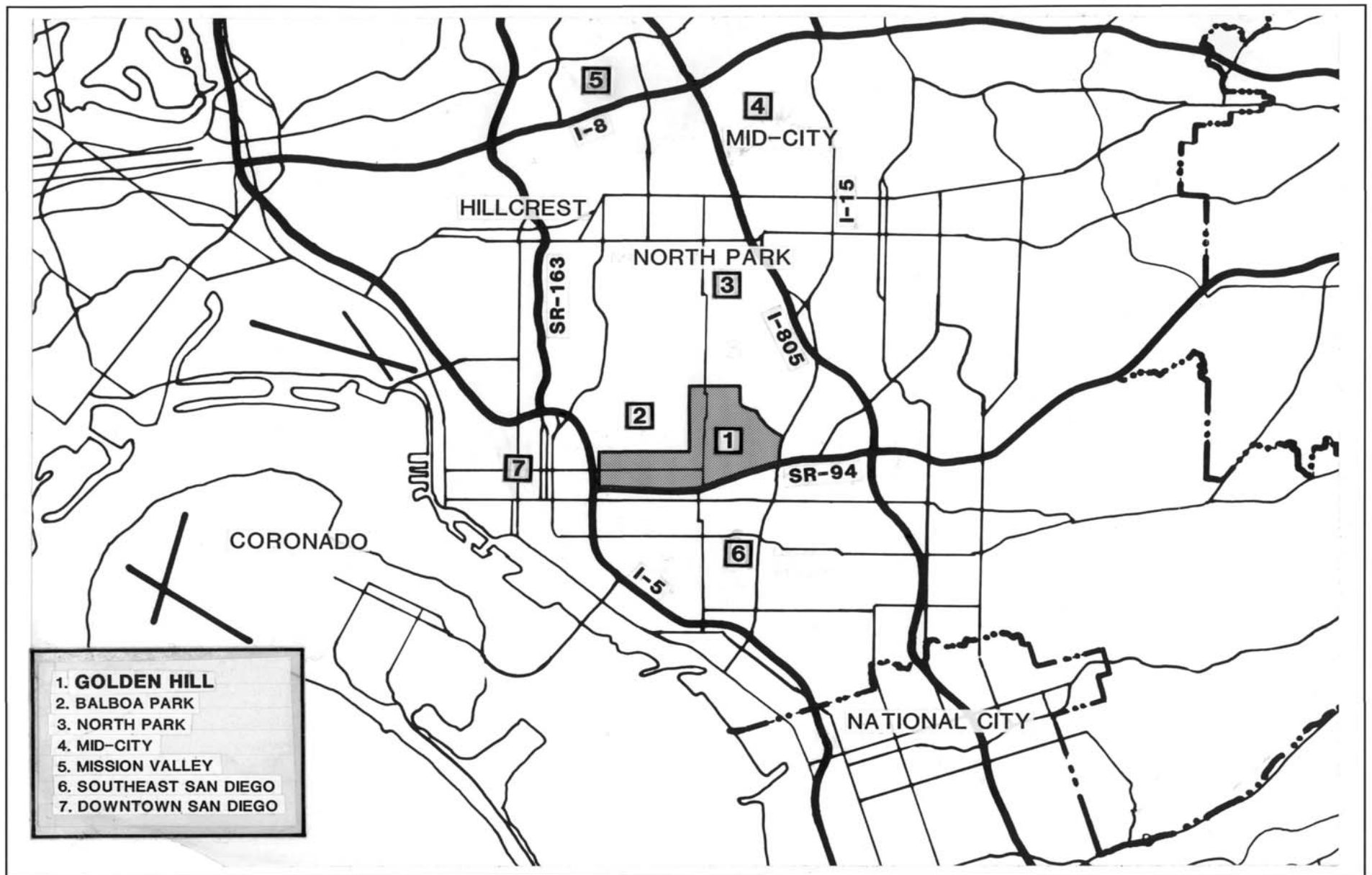
The community's location, excellent regional access, view opportunities, and historical characteristics are resources that will encourage development and redevelopment within the community. The purpose of this plan is to ensure that this development will reflect the community's past and be sensitive to the older established character, scale, design and topographical features. This will be accomplished by providing an updated set of proposals and recommendations which will guide development to assist the community in achieving its full potential as a viable place to live and work.



GOLDEN HILL COMMUNITY PLANNING AREA

Golden Hill Community Plan
City of San Diego • Planning Department

Figure 1



LOCATION MAP / ADJACENT COMMUNITIES

Golden Hill Community Plan
City of San Diego • Planning Department

Figure 2

COMMUNITY HISTORY

The Golden Hill community can trace its history back to the 1860s. The first land to be subdivided was in 1869, in the western section of Golden Hill. Golden Hill was then at the fringe of development in San Diego and offered large lots with views. During the early 1870s subdivisions to the east were added, but most construction continued on the extreme western slopes of the planning area. In 1887, the community received its name when Daniel Schuyler petitioned the City to name the area Golden Hill. Schuyler wrote the following poem which was published in the March, 1887 edition of Golden Era Magazine:

*As the sun rolls down and is lost in sight, tinting the
scene with its golden light, the islands dim and the
fading shores, the ebbing tide through our harbor
door. The drooping sails of an anchored fleet, the
shadowy city at our feet.*

*With the mountains' proud peaks so lofty and still,
'Tis a picture worth seeing from Golden Hill.*

In the 1880s and 1890s, the community experienced two "boom and bust" periods directly related with the "on and off" proposal of a connecting intercontinental railroad. In 1895, despite the fact that San Diego was slated to be at the end of the railroad branch line to Los Angeles, Golden Hill had become a fashionable place to live for mayors, senators, and judges. Development at that time reflected a suburban community similar to that of the "streetcar suburbs" in the east.

In the early 1900s E. Bartlett Webster formed the Bartlett Estate Company and began subdividing lots along the eastern side of City Park (now Balboa Park). Bartlett's goal was to create a "high-class residential district" which he subsequently called South Park.

As an incentive to buy a lot in the South Park, Bartlett established the South Park and East Side Railway to service the transit needs of the community. Construction of this electric street railway began in 1906. The line started at the end of Broadway, continued through downtown and Golden Hill on to Dartmouth (now Beech) and ended at Amhurst Street (now Cedar Street) and 30th Street. A power house was built at the line's terminus.

Bartlett eventually lost control of the South Park and East Side Railway to John D. Spreckles, who extended the line along 30th Street and on to North Park. The only sign today of the railway's past is an open slice of land which diagonally bisects the block bordered to the south by Ivy Street and to the east by Fern Street. A trolley stop was once located at this point. Trolley service along 30th Street was eventually discontinued. The automobile became the predominant mode of transportation for urban dwellers.

Today, many examples of the neighborhood's past are still intact. In Golden Hill, within a one- or two-block area, one can trace the development of residential architecture from the Victorian houses of the 1880s to the concept of the "Craftsman" home in the new century. In addition, the area contains dwellings built for families of diverse economic backgrounds. The Quartermass-

Wilde House at 24th Street and Broadway (City Historical Landmark No. 39), for example, recalls a spectacularly affluent mode of living at the turn of the century. On the other hand, a small bungalow with Japanese details on the western slope represents a humble but colorful California style of living circa 1906. Both, along with many other structures dating from this early era, illustrate a unique architectural and urban environmental heritage.

The construction activity during the latter half of the 1880s was strongly influenced by the Victorian style. Pattern books of Victorian residential architecture were published during this period to help individuals of moderate means construct relatively inexpensive housing. While there are many variations of Victorian residential architecture it can generally be identified by ornateness, irregular plans, decorative craftsmanship, and diversity of textures. Structures from this early period remaining in the planning area range from modest houses (examples include a row along 20th Street) to more elaborate residences, most notably the Hayward-Patterson House at 2148 Broadway (City Historical Landmark No. 85), and the Klauber House at 30th and E Streets.

During the late 1890s and early 1900s, however, Victoriana fell out of favor. Classical and Colonial revival styles became increasingly popular, but even these did not represent anything near the enormous popularity enjoyed previously by the Victorians. Instead, design explorations were underway which were to foster enormous change in residential architecture. Experimentation was the hallmark of turn-of-the-century architecture and it was during this period that the area between 24th Street and 25th Street developed.

The mansions constructed during this period reflect a certain confusion in American taste. One architectural style which seemed to predominate is the classical revival style (use of Roman and Greek orders). This style is identified by columns primarily accenting the porch. The structures are both large and some have hipped roofs with single window or gabled dormers on the smaller houses. This revival movement was to remain relatively strong for a number of years after 1900.

The beginning of the new century marked a turning point in California residential architecture. Victoriana was dead and the stylistic confusion which was typical of the 1890s began to resolve itself. The major influence was to be based upon a radical new design concept—no longer were huge mansions in vogue.

Craftsman and bungalow style architecture became popular because they were smaller and more economical to build than Victorians. "Craftsman" architecture advocated a return to rusticity and nature. The majority of residential structures east of 28th Street along the Park as well as many other neighborhoods of Golden Hill reflect these styles. Most of the best examples of Craftsman style structures are large structures and were constructed between 1905 and 1920 for middle to upper class families. Exposed beams and rafters of naturally stained wood are common, as is local rock used to construct chimneys, fireplaces, and porch supporting columns. The bungalow was also popular during this time and was an expression of the "Craftsman" movement. Bungalows are in many styles but are usually a story and a half with a gable. Some properties reflect a Japanese style treatment popular in this era as the United States opened trade with Japan. There are also many Mission style structures in Golden Hill. Characteristics of this style include low-pitched red tile roofs, arched openings, balconies and towers.

It should be noted that no individual designer was exclusively responsible for the architectural trend so strongly represented throughout much of Golden Hill. Some architectural authorities attribute it primarily to a refinement of the shingle-style (smaller residences) which became popular in New England and the Midwest during the last quarter of the 19th century. Shingle style combined a variety of geometric forms and had roofs of moderate pitch, with shed or gabled dormers. The so-called Berkeley School was also a significant influence along with the Greene Brothers. The local architects of note included Will Hebbard, Emor Brooke Weaver, Irving Gill, and William Templeton Johnson. In view of the historical development, it is this diversity of architectural character rather than any specific style that should be recognized and preserved in Golden Hill.

By the early 1920s, the area of Golden Hill adjacent to Balboa Park was almost completely developed. During the depression era growth slowed in the community and little development occurred. As residential development increased during the 1940s and 1950s, zoning in this area allowed high density development. This resulted in the loss of many older and historically significant homes to new multi-family development, which was sometimes out-of-scale and out-of-character with the existing neighborhoods, and to the conversion of other large homes into apartments. With this increase of housing units came a decrease in the average family income. As non-owner occupied residences increased, a general deterioration in the condition of property and a loss of pride in the community's image followed. The lower rents resulted in an increase in the variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. This variety brought diversity to the neighborhood which today provides much of its urban appeal.

Through all of these changes a stable base of homeowners has remained. Over the past ten years homeownership has increased consistently and resulted in many community improvement activities and an increased recognition of the value of the older, established neighborhoods of the Golden Hill.

PLANNING HISTORY

Prior to the 1960s development in the Golden Hill community was guided only by the City's Zoning Ordinance and the policies of the General Plan for San Diego. In the 1960s Golden Hill was contained within two distinct community planning areas. Planning in the area north of A Street began in 1966 as part of the Park North-East Planning Program, and in the area south of A Street in 1965, as part of the Southeast San Diego Planning Program. The Park North-East Plan was adopted in 1970 and the Southeast San Diego Community Plan was adopted in 1969. As the impetus for downtown redevelopment increased, so did the concerns of the citizens of Golden Hill. They felt that they needed a special planning focus because of their proximity to downtown, views, freeway access and nearby recreational amenities. The City Council agreed and directed the Planning Department to prepare a precise plan for Golden Hill.

The Golden Hill Precise Plan (Precise Plan) was prepared with the assistance of the Greater Golden Hill Community Planning Committee, the community's officially recognized planning group, and was adopted by the City Council on February 13, 1979. In February 1980, the City Council rezoned certain properties in Golden Hill to implement the recommendations of the Precise Plan (see Figure 3). However, in some areas the rezonings did not conform to the residential densities or open space recommendations proposed by the Precise Plan. This action permitted development to occur at different densities than recommended by the Precise Plan (see Figure 4).

In April 1985, the Greater Golden Hill Community Planning Committee requested that the City rezone all property in the planning area to conform with the recommendations of the 1979 Precise Plan. This request resulted from a concern on the part of the planning committee that development at densities different than those recommended by the Precise Plan had demonstrated an adverse impact on the character and scale of the community, transportation system, and infrastructure network within Golden Hill.

The City responded to the request with a proposal for an update of the Precise Plan which would address issues of appropriate land uses densities, the preservation of open space, and the appropriate scale and character of new development.

In December 1986, the Planning Department conducted a Planning Commission workshop to consider concepts and recommendations contained in the preliminary community plan draft for Golden Hill. Since that time, the Planning Department has held two community meetings to inform residents of the update recommendations, to gather a broader range of community input, and to receive consensus on the recommendations contained in the draft community plan.

ZONING NOT REPRESENTED HERE

ZONING NOT REPRESENTED HERE

SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

Since the Golden Hill Precise Plan was adopted in 1979, many changes have occurred in the community. These changes require modification to the Precise Plan recommendations if the goals and objectives of both the Precise Plan and General Plan are to be achieved. The revised plan will become the "Community Plan" for the area. The community plan addresses the entire area within the established planning area boundaries including the area regulated under the Golden Hill Planned District Ordinance. The purpose of this plan is to ensure that development will reflect the community's past and be sensitive to the scale, character, typography and design of the older, established neighborhoods. This will be accomplished by providing an updated set of proposals and recommendations in this plan to guide development and assist the community in achieving its full potential as a viable place to live and work.

The Progress Guide and General Plan for the City of San Diego designates community planning areas in the City in which specific land use proposals are made in the form of community plans. Taken together, these plans form the Land Use Element of the General Plan. This process allows the community plan to refine the policies of the City down to the community level within the context of citywide goals and objectives. Therefore, this plan addresses issues and goals which are unique to the community and will serve to implement the goals which have been formulated by the Golden Hill community.

This plan should not be considered a static document. It is intended to provide guidance for the orderly growth of the Golden Hill community. In order to respond to unanticipated changes in environmental, social or economic conditions, the plan must be continually monitored and reviewed on a regular basis. While piecemeal amendments should be avoided, a comprehensive review with amendments may be necessary for the plan to remain relevant to community and City needs in the future. Once adopted, two additional steps will follow: implementation and review. Implementation is the process of putting plan policies and recommendations into effect. Review refers to the process of monitoring the community and recommending changes to the plan as conditions in the community change. Guidelines for implementation are provided in the plan. The actual work requires a cooperative effort of private citizens, City officials and other agencies. The Greater Golden Hill Community Planning Committee, and other private citizens and organizations, will provide the continuity needed for a sustained, effective implementation program. Upon adoption, the Golden Hill Community Plan contained herein will supersede the previous Greater Golden Hill Precise Plan adopted on February 13, 1979 by Resolution No. 222820.

While the plan sets forth procedures for implementation, the adoption of the plan by the City Council does not establish new regulations or rezone property. The plan, however, provides the comprehensive land use policy framework upon which rezonings may be undertaken. If the implementation of the land use recommendations necessitates rezonings, then subsequent or concurrent public actions, including noticed public hearings would be undertaken as necessary to rezone the property in accordance with the plan recommendations.

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The Golden Hill Community Plan was developed within the context of a legislative framework consisting of federal, state and local levels. Some of the more significant legislation is discussed below.

- Section 65450 of the Governmental Code of the State of California (state Planning and Zoning Act) gives authority for the preparation of community plans and specifies the elements which must appear in each plan. It also provides the means for adopting and administering these plans.
- Title 7, Division 1, Chapter 4.3 of the California Government Code (the Planning and Zoning Law) requires that local governments and agencies provide incentives to developers to include affordable units in housing projects. The City has adopted an ordinance establishing an Affordable Density Bonus pursuant to Chapter 10, Division 3, Section 101.0307 of the San Diego Municipal Code.
- The California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 (CEQA) requires that environmental reports be prepared for all community and precise plans. Separate environmental reports may also be required for many projects which implement this plan.
- The Regional Air Quality Strategy (RAQS) was developed in 1977 to achieve a level of air quality in the San Diego Air Basin that would meet federal air quality standards set forth in the National Clean Air Act. A major recommendation pertinent to this planning effort is to include air quality considerations in all land use and transportation plans.
- The Progress Guide and General Plan serves as a basis for the development of the community plan. The General Plan sets forth goals, standards and criteria for the provision of facilities that are essential in the community and possess citywide importance.
- The citywide Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances regulate the development of land and subdivision of land in preparation for development.
- In addition to legislation, the City Council has adopted a number of policies to serve as guidelines in the decision making process. Many of the policies relate directly to planning issues and should be used in implementing plan recommendations.

PLAN FORMAT

The diversity of the Golden Hill community calls for a plan that will provide compatibility between the various neighborhoods within the overall planning area. The overall goals of the plan provide a basis for the objectives and recommendations found within each element. Each element includes the existing conditions, objectives and recommendations for the particular subject area.

PLAN SUMMARY

PLAN SUMMARY

The Golden Hill Community Plan identifies the issues and goals of the community with respect to land use, urban design, public facilities, socio-economic conditions and environmental constraints. Issues have been identified based on an examination of existing conditions and as the result of meetings and workshops with community residents within Golden Hill. Objectives and recommendations have been developed to respond to these issues. Finally, an implementation section identifies specific actions that are necessary to implement the recommendations of the plan.

The Land Use Plan as illustrated in Figure 5 is a visual representation of the major land use proposals set forth in the following plan elements. The map by itself, however, does not constitute the Golden Hill Community Plan. The text of this document is equally necessary to interpret the intent of the community and the City of San Diego with respect to this area.

The plan map and text are the guide for future development in Golden Hill. Single-family and low-density residential land uses will continue to occupy a large area in Golden Hill. Multi-family residential development will be concentrated along the Broadway corridor, other thoroughfares, and in adjacent neighborhoods already experiencing density increases. Hillside and open space areas will be preserved by limiting development. Revitalization of the commercial centers will provide concentration of a wide range and variety of commercial services for residents in Golden Hill.

Provisions to ensure that new development is compatible with the scale, character and typical lot pattern are addressed in the plan recommendations. Other recommendations include transportation improvements, improving recreational facilities, commercial revitalization and urban design guidelines.

ISSUES FACING THE COMMUNITY

In the initial phase of the development of this plan, the Greater Golden Hill Community Planning Committee identified the following issues as the most important concerns to be addressed in the community plan:

- Achieving conformance between zoning and community plan land use designations.
- Preservation of community scale, character/ historical and architectural resources.
- Preservation of single-family and low-density neighborhoods.
- Clustering of high density residential development along transit corridors.
- Revitalization of commercial areas.
- Preservation of open space.
- Elimination of land use conflicts.

OVERALL COMMUNITY GOALS

The following have been established as overall goals for the Golden Hill Community Plan. More specific objectives are found within the individual plan elements.

1. To preserve and enhance the quality of housing opportunities for all income levels and to maintain the distinctive architectural character and scale of the area.
2. To maintain the heritage of Golden Hill by preserving historically and architecturally significant structures.
3. Retain the character of residential neighborhoods.
4. To ensure that new development is in character and scale with the community.
5. To maintain and revitalize the existing retail commercial areas.
6. To preserve existing open space areas.
7. To improve the overall appearance of the area by adopting urban design standards for compatible housing design, streetscape improvements and commercial revitalization.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

This community plan includes a number of recommendations to achieve the stated goals and objectives. Listed below is a summary of the major recommendations.

1. Preservation of single-family and low density areas.
Single-family and low density areas presently zoned for low-medium and medium densities are recommended to be decreased to preserve the stable, well-maintained and predominantly single-family neighborhoods in Golden Hill.
2. Cluster high density residential development along and adjacent to the Broadway corridor.
High intensity residential development is recommended along the Broadway corridor and in adjacent areas already experiencing density increases. Higher density is appropriate along transit corridors because it permits greater numbers of residents to live near routes which provide direct access from their community to other communities, thus reducing through traffic on local neighborhood streets.
3. Urban design. Discretionary review of most multi-family development is recommended to ensure that larger scale residential development is compatible with the scale, character and typical lot pattern of older development in Golden Hill.
4. Historical site survey. The full extent of the historically and architecturally significant structures outside of the historic subarea of the planned district is unknown. To preserve these resources a comprehensive historical site survey is recommended to identify structures that are historically and architecturally significant and worthy of preservation.

5. Elimination of industrial area. Replacement of the existing industrial land use designation to medium density residential development is recommended. Although several industrial uses operate in the area, the area is not suitable for industrial use because of the steep grade and poor access from C Street to Delevan Street. Additionally, traffic from the industrial area has a significant impact on the adjacent residential neighborhoods.
6. Commercial revitalization programs. The City of San Diego has initiated two revitalization programs in Golden Hill. The purpose of the revitalization programs is to act as a catalyst for other improvements within the business districts to stimulate economic revitalization. The programs concentrate on physical improvements to the public right-of-way which include undergrounding of overhead utilities, in addition to curb, sidewalk, landscaping and street lighting improvements.
7. Preservation of open space. Canyon and hillside areas designated as open space and also within the Hillside Review (HR) Overlay Zone are recommended to be rezoned to R1-40000 to preserve their natural character. This affects the 32nd and 34th Street Canyon areas which are currently zoned R1-10000, R1-5000, R-3000 and R-1500.
8. Location of residential care facilities. Golden Hill has an over-concentration of residential care facilities. To stop this trend from continuing, conditional use permits for residential care facilities must require that there is a minimum of 600 feet between such facilities.
9. Updating the Golden Hill Planned District Ordinance. To ensure consistency with the goals, objectives and recommendations of this community plan.
10. Do not grant Conditional Use Permits for the non-residential use of historic structures in areas designated for low density residential use. Golden Hill has a number of homes in the low density, single-family neighborhoods that are of significant historic value, and their preservation is a primary goal, as is the maintenance of their residential character, therefore, non-residential use should not be permitted in designated historic structures in the low density neighborhoods.